

Mated to the Werewolf King

Man In The Beast

Returning to the house of the man whose daughter I took away only to beg for her back was far more excruciating than the wolfsbane-infused whiplashing I endured.

Mark Tesner was the alpha of the pack in this area, never any activity worth reporting, and he seemed a solid man.

He stood valiantly, with his arms crossed and squared jaw clenched, staring at me with a daring look in his eyes.

Next to him was his son, nearly the same size, and equally if not more enraged by my visit.

"I'm looking for Belle," I said, keeping my expression firm and domineering.

I was still the King of the Werewolves and would not let my subordinates intimidate me.

"I'm surprised you didn't just break down the door again," he said to me, with narrow eyes.

I clenched my jaw and held my tongue. Normally, I wouldn't tolerate such a disrespectful comment, but I wasn't here to dominate.

I was here for Belle.

"Bring her to me," I said assertively.

The boy crossed his arms to mimic his father. They looked very similar, except for the eyes.

"Do you remember who she is now?" the boy asked.

I could feel my nails pressing into my palms as my hands tightened into fists. Again, I took a breath and kept my cool.

"I remember everything...including how much she means to me," I admitted.

Then, I heard her voice, and all of my anger disappeared like a bad dream.

"Keith?" Belle's voice emerged from behind them.

She was shuffling behind them to see if it was me when, finally, I caught sight of her eyes.

Those deep blues lured me in, just as they had the first time we met.

"Belle!" I said, mesmerized. "I need to speak with you."

At first, her face lit up. She was excited, and I wanted her to jump into my arms right then.

But she paused for a moment. Her arms crossed in the same manner as her father.

"What is it you wish to say, my King?" she asked, with a raised eyebrow.

Why was she being so spiteful?

"Belle, please, come out here and speak with me privately," I grunted.

But she remained where she was, defiant and unmoving.

"Belle!" I said, as I reached between her father and brother.

They pushed me back with unexpected strength.

I knew they were only protecting her, but I couldn't hold back a growl that raised every hair on my body.

How dare they stand between me and my precious mate?

"I remember..." I said to her.

"What do you remember?" her brother asked me.

This was humiliating. A King being treated like a peasant! I wanted to shift into my wolf form as I had before and show my true power.

But I paused as I stared down at them and knew it would only make things worse.

After all we had been through, that much, I had learned.

But I needed her to know.

"I love you, Belle," I forced the words out of my mouth, situated by my own vulnerability.

Mark and Sean did not expect those words from me.

No one did.

Even Belle's hard composure softened upon hearing my words.

But I said them, and I meant them.

I stood there stripped of everything as they continued to stare in disbelief.

"I love you, Belle."

His words, not mine.

They were not the Demon Lord's or the Vampire King's... Those words came from Keith's beautiful lips.

As simple as those words were, I didn't believe them until they were spoken.

Sean and my father looked at me, painfully uncomfortable, as they didn't know how to handle the situation anymore.

"Mark? Sean?" Keith called to them, bowing his head slightly. "I recognize my indecent behavior from the moment I arrived for her last time. I apologize."

I was shocked. Both my father and Sean were shocked.

The Werewolf King, apologizing to one of his subordinates...that was unheard of.

I waved them off, freeing them from their familial duties. They quickly went inside.

As the door closed behind me, I took another step closer to Keith, whose glistening eyes stayed locked on mine.

"Do you mean that?" I asked.

What if this was just some other sick spell someone put on him? At this point, I couldn't decide and was scared to find out.

But I could see a clarity in his eyes that told me he was not lying.

"Yes, Belle. I love you. I knew it from the moment I first laid eyes on you," he pleaded.

I laughed at the thought of it. He had torn me away from my family with cold claws and no shred of loving warmth.

"I know the way I behaved was horrible, but you've changed me more than I could ever imagine. We're perfect together, I can feel it!" he insisted.

"Then, why didn't you say anything back then?" I snapped, surprising myself.

"How do I know you're not going to go off with Zena, or Daisy, or some other girl, the moment things get rough?"

It was an honest question, and Keith's response gave me an honest answer. He showed remorse for the actions he could and could not remember.

All of them.

"Because I'm not afraid anymore!" he shouted.

Now, he surprised me. The Werewolf King, afraid?

He waited for me to fill in the blanks, but I folded my arms, waiting for him instead.

Keith bowed his head once more and sighed.

"You made me feel so many new things I had never before experienced. The pull you had on my body was at times uncontrollable. Just like it is now."

I wanted to hug him, but I also wanted to show restraint.

And something still kept me at an arm's length from the man standing before me.

He gathered his thoughts and took a deep breath.

"When I went to my throne room, everything came back to me in a flood of memories. I know what I did. And I promise you, Belle, I will never put you through that ever again!"

I softened at his genuineness and felt the last few fears melt away with the morning sun. He seemed sentimental and sincere.

It was hard to stay mad at him...

Then, I had the sudden creeping suspicion we were being spied on.

Though it took every ounce of my energy to do so, I broke away from him and looked back, spotting my mother and Sean watching us through the bay windows.

"Oh, Moon Goddess... Let's go for a walk," I said.

Keith waited until we had moved to another block before he held my hand.

At first, we were silent, enjoying the very early morning breeze and taking in each other's company.

"I've been longing for this since the moment you left," Keith broke the silence.

I looked into his sympathetic eyes, and he looked back into mine.

"I was so lost and confused, and instead of speaking with you about it, I just turned away. It was cowardly."

"You had your memory wiped. It's not your fault," I assured him.

"Yes, it was!" he said. "That day that I ran out of the room..."

My stomach pulled in as I held my breath. That day had crushed my soul.

"I was scared. I wanted to mark you, but I remembered the prophecy," he admitted.

"What prophecy?" I asked.

Right there in the middle of my quiet neighborhood, Keith told me everything.

The Moon Goddess had given him the scroll and a simple decree: if he should mark me as his mate, eternal war would break out.

That night, when we were in his room together, I remembered seeing a softly glowing light but did not understand.

I couldn't have understood in that moment.

The weight of his reveal sank on my shoulders, and I tried not to let it show—but I was never good at concealing my emotions.

And here I was, thinking he just didn't want me. I hadn't known just how much was riding on whether or not I was marked by him.

Instead, he didn't want the world to end because of our fate...

"What the hell did I do to be the reason for complete destruction!?" I shrieked, getting a chuckle out of Keith. "Damned if you mark me, damned if you don't."

Keith stepped forward and gently took my hands in his.

"No, not at all. I realize now, I was damned for not following my true feelings. And if you had been taken away forever..."

He stopped and let his voice trail away.

I smiled at him and squeezed his hands. His eyes continued to glisten in the sun, and his lips made me feel giddy.

"So, what do we do now?" I asked.

"I don't know," he mumbled. We were lost in each other's eyes, looking for a conclusion neither of us could come to.

We began our walk again and naturally looped around the block, stopping in front of my house.

"Is it wrong that I want you more than anything? Even if it means war...?" I asked.

His eyes were a dream. I could happily drown in them.

Of course, I wanted peace for all, but it seemed war had already commenced regardless of where we stood.

And no matter what might happen from here on out, I wanted to stand with him.

"Belle, I've spent my entire life thinking someone like you was impossible for me," he said. "That as King, I could never find my true queen."

"You gave me empathy and you showed me that love is more than a weakness. It builds strength from within, and I'd be truly damned to lose you to anyone else again."

His words made me feel like I was levitating, but my powers weren't activating, and my feet were planted right in the ground.

This was his own magic.

He pulled me into him with a warm embrace. I could feel his breath on my lips, and I wanted him.

All of him.

Keith could feel my determination, and I could feel his.

"These worlds are already at war...they always have been. So, if I'm going to fight, then I'm going to fight. But, for Moon Goddess' sake, I want you there with me."

In that moment, my knees buckled.

My father had been wrong. Truth was not found in silence; it was found in breaking silence. Right before me, I witnessed what power this truth held.

This beast I loved had become the man who was destined for me, and nothing, not even a war, could stop this.

"Well, then, by all means...mark me," I said.